



### **Description**

The elongated dorsal and anal fins, which extend back towards the tail gives the appearance of three tails hence the common name tripletail. The body shape is similar to a freshwater sunfish, and the mouth is large with a protruding lower jaw – perfect for engulfing prey during an ambush. The color ranges from a yellowish tint to a dark brown. Typically, there is mottling or spots along the side.

### **Habitat**

The tripletail occurs in Georgia's coastal waters during the spring, summer, and autumn. They can be found near structure, both floating and stationary, or free-swimming in shallow waters off barrier islands. The tripletail has a preference for the down current side of fixed structure, which is why it is referred to as an eddyfish in local vernacular.

### **Biology**

Little is known about the life cycle and habits of the tripletail. Tagging studies are currently underway and it appears that the tripletail found in coastal Georgia migrate to south Florida during the winter. Females grow larger than males and can reach weights in excess of 40 pounds. The current Georgia state record is a fish that weighed 38 pounds, 14 ounces caught by 17-year old Kyle Thigpen of Brunswick, Georgia on Father's Day 2005. The tripletail is an opportunistic feeder and preys on squid, shrimp, and a variety of fishes. Current regulations are five fish per day with an 18-inch minimum length limit.

### **Fishing for Tripletail**

For years Georgia anglers targeted tripletail by fishing around pilings and channel markers with live shrimp. In the 1990s, sight fishing for free-swimming tripletail became popular. This style of fishing tests the casting skills of the angler and the boat handling skills of the person at the helm. Natural and artificial baits, including saltwater flies, are effective for tripletail. A hooked tripletail is a formidable opponent making strong runs and dramatically leaping from the water. The gill cover has a razor-sharp edge, so anglers must handle tripletail with care. They are excellent table fare.